



The Current

News from IBEW Local 1837

Summer 2015 Issue

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Maine & New Hampshire

First Half of 2015 Marked by Contract Votes in ME & NH

Union Negotiating Teams logged countless hours at the bargaining table in the winter and spring to reach agreements that were later ratified by IBEW 1837 members in both states. Most companies continue to engage in so-called “tough bargaining” where they propose deep concessions without first making a compelling case for their economic necessity. Hard work by IBEW staff and members was successful in holding the line against most of the givebacks and actually making gains in many areas.

Emera Maine

IBEW 1837 members at Emera ratified a new 5-year contract in early July that includes wage increases in most classifications and comparatively modest increases in health insurance premiums. Voter turnout was high with more than 90% of the 200 workers in the bargaining unit casting ballots in either Bangor or Presque Isle.

Over the term of the agreement most of the workers will see a nearly 15% wage increase with a notable exception being the 20 Customer Service Representatives and three Stockhandlers in the southern part of Emera’s territory. The Company had proposed wage cuts for these classifications to bring them to parity with their workers in the northern part of the state. Eventually the Company agreed to freeze their pay while giving the CSR’s and Stockhandlers annual lump sum payments of \$650 and \$1,000, respectively.

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Eversource Generation Members Prepare for Divestiture; Ratify Contract Extension



Union members at Eversource Generation assets including Schiller Station who are affected by the anticipated divestiture will be eligible for additional benefits under the terms of the agreement reached between the Company and the Union.

IBEW members working in the electric generation assets of Eversource NH (formerly PSNH) have overwhelmingly ratified an agreement that extends their current contract while providing additional employee protections if the fossil or hydro facilities are sold or closed.

Eversource entered into settlement talks related to the divestiture of their generating assets as the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission was responding to a law passed last year. That law gave the PUC the authority to force the Company to sell the assets if it was in the “economic interest” of ratepayers. PSNH had been under pressure to sell in large part because costs associated with a state-mandated “scrubber” to reduce mercury emissions at Merrimack Station had led to substantial increases in residential electric rates.

The union ratification vote came as the New Hampshire House of Representatives prepared to vote on Senate Bill 221 to securitize stranded debt if a divestiture settlement was reached and approved by the PUC. The Union participated in the settlement talks and found widespread support among the legislature and the State Office of Energy Planning for employee protections for workers who may be affected by divestiture.

The Union represents nearly 175 members at the Merrimack Station, Newington Station and Schiller Station fossil fuel plants as well as at hydropower generating facilities throughout the state. They also represent generation maintenance workers. All of these dedicated workers may soon find

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First Half of 2015 Marked by Contract Votes in ME & NH

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“It’s still a struggle for membership to see the huge profits these companies are making and then see some of the initial proposals that they put on the table,” IBEW Local #1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers told the Bangor Daily News.

The two Emera Call Centers will be combined as of 2019 in Presque Isle. The CSR’s in Bangor will receive a \$5,000 lump sum payment for their moving expenses if they choose to relocate up north.

The new contract eliminates the good attendance bonus but adds 24-hours personal time for all members.

An article has been added to the agreement for out-of-town staging. Members sent out-of-town with less than 24-hours notice will receive six hours of premium pay. Those who receive more than 24-hours notice will receive two hours of premium pay. A stand-by premium will be paid if workers are put on stand-by while out-of-town.

All of Emera will move to one employee seniority list under the new contract, effective September 30, 2015.

For the first time, the Emera collective bargaining agreement will include language on our members conducting business on behalf of the Union.

A number of changes in the contract will benefit members working in System Operations. They will now be covered in the main body of the collective bargaining agreement under a separate article.

Changes to term positions include the ability for members who request a return to their previous position in the first 45 days on that job to be returned within 45 days of the request.

The Union successfully bargained for improvements to the Grievance process that shorten the timeline between filing and arbitration. The change should result in quicker resolutions for our members.

Employee and dependent health insurance changes include increases in deductibles and maximum out-of-pocket expenses. Weekly premiums will also increase but at a significantly lower rate than in the last five years.

As is often the case, although Union and Company negotiators met for several weeks, and occasionally with the assistance of a federal mediator, much of the agreement was hammered out in the final 24 hours of bargaining. Dick Rogers was joined on the Union Negotiating Team by Emera union members Jon Lauritsen, Bob Economy, Bruce Ayotte, Jeff Linscott, Pat Cote, Jim Getchell, Cary Daigle and Renee Gilman. Roxanne Smith and Steve Lemieux also provided help serving on subcommittees.

“We’re fortunate to have dedicated union members and stewards at all of our companies who serve on these negotiating teams and Emera is certainly no exception,” Rogers said. “They’re a great team. I’d like to express my appreciation to them and to all of our members at Emera for their patience and professionalism during these difficult negotiations.”

Eversource Generation

Union and Company negotiators reached agreement on an extension to the current collective bargaining agreement with a series of enhancements to the addendum of protections for workers affected by divestiture of generation assets. A full story begins on page 1.

NextEra

Members of IBEW Local Union #1837 at NextEra ratified a new 44-month contract in late March. The collective bargaining agreement includes wage adjustments for some classifications, yearly wage increases for all union members, and a change to benefits. While the negotiating team struggled with the company’s offer, they felt it was the best they were going to be able to achieve.

“I want to thank everyone who was able to attend the meetings and understand the offer being presented. I also want to thank the committee for the hard work they put in to realize the gains that were made” said IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers.

Brother Rogers was joined on the Union Negotiating Team by Assistant Business Manager Bill Dunn, IBEW 1837 President Ray Colello, and Shop Stewards John Kelly and Peter Brennan.



NextEra’s oil-fired Wyman Station in Yarmouth had been up for sale but was taken off the market last year. Although it runs infrequently, Wyman provides vital capacity on days of peak demand during the winter.

“I want to recognize Dick and Bill for their expertise handling contract negotiations,” Brother Brennan said. “They had skills and professionalism to handle a tough contract. Our members should understand the money they spend for their union dues goes toward these negotiating expenses.”

Bill Dunn expressed his gratitude to the union membership for their patience through the lengthy negotiating process. “It’s clear that the membership was disappointed at the lack of respect shown by the company towards them,” Dunn said. “We hope the company will use every bit of their efforts in the future to give their employees more respect than what they have given over the past year and during these negotiations, and attempt to rebuild the trust that they had worked on at one time. We can only hope they might renew their stated values.”

There are 42 members of IBEW 1837 who work for NextEra (formerly Florida Power and Light) generating electricity. They maintain and operate Wyman Station oil-fired plant on Cousins Island in Yarmouth, Maine, and the smaller oil-fired Cape Station in South Portland.

WGME and WPFO-TV in Portland

A 3-year contract agreement was ratified in April by members working at WGME and WPFO in Portland, Maine. The margin in favor of the new deal with the Sinclair Broadcast Group was the tightest in the union’s history at the CBS affiliate.

“It was clear from the discussions we had with members that most of them were very dissatisfied with the contract package,” IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers said. “I think that a narrow majority just felt that the Union Negotiating Team had probably gotten the best deal they could get from this company.”

The union represents 50 photographers, producers, directors, operating technicians, video editors and maintenance engineers at the stations. There was 100% member turnout for the contract meetings and ratification vote.

One of the most contentious issues was the Company’s insistence on unilateral discretion in the assignment of shifts in most job classifications. Previously, seniority had played a much larger role among workers qualified to perform a job. Negotiators were able to craft language which will provide protection against “arbitrary or capricious” assignments and the Union will be vigilant in holding the Company to that standard.

Another sticking point was a Company proposal to use non-union workers to perform some bargaining unit work. The Union insisted on language providing job security and preventing the erosion of union positions at the stations.

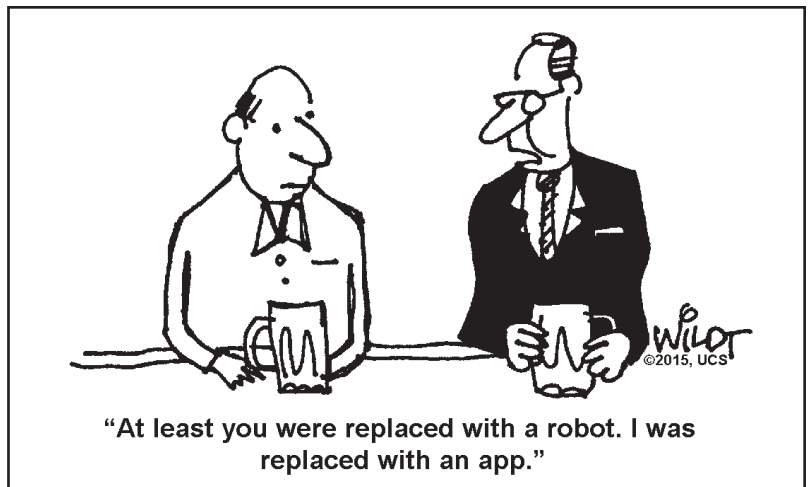
The negotiations took place as Sinclair and other broadcast companies have experienced significant growth in revenues from political advertising. Although top scale employees will receive a 3% wage increase this year, the second and third years of the agreement will only have 1% increases. Non-top scale workers will receive wage adjustments and continue to receive step increases.

“As always, I’m grateful to our Union Negotiating Team, especially our Chief Steward Jack Amrock,” Rogers said. “They’re not very happy with this agreement but their hard work helped make what would have been a terrible deal something that most of our members could live with.”

Joining Rogers and Amrock on the union side of the bargaining table were Bill Pavlisko, Joel Messer and IBEW 1837 Organizer Matt Beck.



WGME and WPFO -TV are affiliates of the CBS and FOX television networks, respectively. Sinclair Broadcast Group owns or provides services to 162 television stations in 79 markets. (Photo: Matt Perry)



IBEW 1837 Welcomes New Office Manager Laurie Kelley

Laurie Kelley has become the new full-time Office Manager of IBEW Local Union #1837, working out of the Maine office in Manchester, Maine. Laurie succeeds longtime Office Manager Debbie Owen, who recently retired after nearly 35 years at the Local.

For many of our members, the Union Office Manager is the friendly and professional voice on the other end of the telephone. The Office Manager answers multiple lines in our Manchester, Maine office, frequently fielding urgent inquiries from members looking for help with a problem at work.

Among the other responsibilities of the job is the maintenance of our database and keeping that information updated for approximately 1,600 members. The Office Manager is charged with keeping up on the paperwork associated with financial records, grievances and arbitrations. She also must prepare for regular audits conducted by the Department of Labor, the International Union, the 2nd District, and our Local office.

When Debbie Owen started in 1980, she split her time between IBEW 1837, IBEW 2327, and LIUNA 327. After about six years, with our membership growing and the workload increasing, IBEW 1837 Business Manager Joe Nixon made the decision to ask Debbie to work full-time for IBEW 1837 as our local's Office Manager. Her retirement in November ends more than three decades of service.

"I know I have some big shoes to fill," Laurie Kelley said. "How do you replace 35 years of experience and knowledge?"

So far, so good according to IBEW 1837 Business Manager Dick Rogers. "We are very fortunate to have someone with her capabilities accept the job," he said.

Although Laurie Kelley is new to the Union staff, she's a familiar and friendly face for longtime visitors to our Maine office. Sister Kelley worked for seven years in an adjacent office as Administrator for United Maine Craftsmen before her most recent stint as Office Manager for the Winthrop Utilities District.

A lifelong Mainer, Laurie was born in Caribou and grew up in North Yarmouth before attending the University of Maine at Orono. When she's not working, she enjoys creative stuff such as quilting and spending time with her husband Johnny and their two dogs.



IBEW 1837 Office Manager Laurie Kelley is also a Notary and will provide her services free of charge to members of the Union at our Maine office.



Debbie Owen was a familiar voice to members who called our Maine Office for nearly 35 years!



Quick Notes and Announcements



Aaron Gilman has been appointed by IBEW Local #1837 President Ray Colello to fill the vacant Unit 10, Bangor, position on our Local Union Executive Board after **Jeff Linscott** relocated to Fort Kent. Brother Gilman is a Lead Working Mechanic for Emera Maine. Our thanks to Jeff for his service to IBEW and congratulations to Aaron!

Eversource Call Center Customer Service Representatives voted 64 - 60 against joining the Union in early July. In spite of strong support from other IBEW members, it was the second unsuccessful organizing campaign there in three years.

Labor Day will be celebrated on Monday, September 7th this year with annual breakfasts scheduled in Portland, Maine, and Manchester, New Hampshire. An afternoon barbecue will be held in Lewiston, Maine, and activities are also planned later in the day in Brewer, Maine. Contact the Union Office at **207-623-1030** or **603-743-1652** for more information.

Eversource Generation Members Prepare for Divestiture

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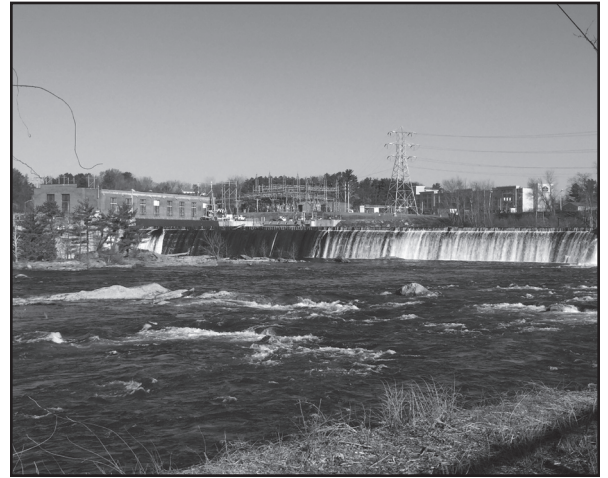
themselves working for another employer. It's also possible they could be out of work if divestiture is ordered and no buyers are found for one or more of the power generating stations.

The protections in the agreement include enhanced severance pay, guaranteed retirement benefits, access to quality, affordable healthcare coverage, tuition assistance, and greater bidding rights into other jobs at Eversource without impacting the rights of other union members in the Utility branch of the company. The agreement also guarantees that any new buyer will continue to honor the existing contract for no less than two years.

"We would like to thank IBEW members Tim Perozzi, Justin McNeff and James Hale for their active participation in those negotiations," said IBEW Assistant Business Manager Tom Ryan. "We'd also like to thank our members for voting and for their patience during this challenging process."

Although the deregulation of the Granite State's electric utilities was started in the late 1990's but the state legislature applied the brakes when skyrocketing rates and rolling brownouts affected other states that had completed the process.

The New Hampshire Senate and House eventually passed Senate Bill 221 to securitize the debt that will allow a settlement agreement to move forward. It was signed into law by Governor Maggie Hassan. The PUC is taking testimony from the settling parties and interveners and is expected to reach a decision in early December. If approved, Eversource will put the assets up for auction in early 2016 with a target date of transferring ownership in the first quarter of 2017.



Hydro facilities such as Amoskeag are expected to attract the interest of both private and municipal buyers.

IBEW 1837 T-Shirts & More!



Members of IBEW 1837 can now custom order their own t-shirts, sweatshirts, and baseball caps online from *Exquisite Stitches*. All clothing is either union made or Made in the USA.

There's a wide variety of available logos, items and sizes available that can be custom stitched by a local company. Check designs, prices and place your order at www.tinyurl.com/IBEW1837apparel.

You can also get more information about other logo options and special orders of FR (fire retardant) stitching required in some job classifications by contacting them directly. Please send them an email at Sales@ExquisiteStitches.com or call 603-401-1263 during regular business hours.



Maine Labor Lobby Days: IBEW 1837 members joined other workers at the State House in Augusta for the AFL-CIO's Labor Lobby Days to ask legislators to oppose anti-union bills. Top photo: Chris Guppy from Central Maine Power, IBEW Organizer Matthew Beck, Anita Libby from CMP and Ed Goodale from Brookfield. Bottom photo: Doug Ames from CMP spoke to Rep. Gay Grant.

IBEW Member Wins City Alderman Race in Manchester, NH



Eversource electrician Anthony Sapienza didn't like what he was reading in the papers about what was going on in his hometown and decided to do something about it. After knocking on over 600 doors in Ward 5, he won a 5-way race with 60% of the vote in a May special election for City Alderman.

The lifelong Manchester resident received nearly three times as many votes as his closest opponent, a veteran school board member who was widely expected to win. In addition to actively meeting and talking to voters in the district, Brother Sapienza's campaign signs were widely visible throughout the neighborhood.

"I did it so I could have input on what's going on in the city," Tony said. "I'm enjoying helping people and voting on things."

Some of the key issues he focussed on in the campaign were strong constituent services, education, holding the line on taxes and crime in the City of Manchester.

Sapienza also plays an active role helping members of IBEW Local #1837 as a Shop Steward and representative from Manchester Unit 2 to the Union Executive Board. He and his wife Shirley have been married for 32 years and have four children that they raised in the city.

Please join us in congratulating Tony and thanking him for his service to the community and his Union.



Sea-3 Expansion Bid: IBEW 1837 provided testimony before the Site Evaluation Committee of the New Hampshire PUC in support of Sea-3's proposed expansion to their propane handling facility in Newington, NH. Some residents in neighboring Portsmouth are opposing it because of the possibility of increased rail traffic in the city. The next meeting of the SEC is scheduled for October 14 - 15.

Popular Eversource System Electrician Tom Rzasa Retires After 45 Years



Tom Rzasa celebrated his retirement with co-workers at the end of a long career at Eversource.

It would be hard to find someone at Eversource more well-liked than Tom Rzasa, a System Electrician at 1250 Hooksett Rd. T&D who retired at the end of July after 45 years with the Company. A friendly and easy-going guy, Brother Rzasa has seen a lot of changes since he started at New Hampshire's largest electric utility in 1970.

"It was a much different feel back then, more like family," Tom said. "I was there about a week when they brought me in and took my picture with people and everyone was saying hello and calling me by name. Someone said 'Do you know who that was? That was (PSNH President) Bill Tallman.' I thought, wow, I just started here and he knows who I am. I'm pretty sure that (Eversource CEO) Tom May doesn't know who I am."

Rzasa started out as a Hydro Operator at Amoskeag for a few years, then moved into the Construction Department for a 13 or 14 year stretch before settling in as a System Electrician. Through it all, he maintained a positive and upbeat attitude.

"I worked with the best guys," he said. "We had fun and enjoyed doing the work together. 45 years went by fast. I had a great run."

Now that he's retired, Tom looks forward to travelling with his wife Jacqueline, a teacher who just retired herself at the end of the school year. They plan to visit the Grand Canyon for the first time as well as Old Faithful and the Hoover Dam. The Rzasas also look forward to spending more time in Maine where they love to visit Old Orchard Beach, Ogunquit, and York Beach where they frequently visit friends.

As he looks back, Tom is grateful to IBEW for what being a union member has meant to him and his family.

"Without the Union, the world would be working for \$8 an hour," Rzasa said. "They stick up for us, help put a buck in our pocket and something to retire."



IBEW 1837 Unit Meetings

Most Meetings Resume in September

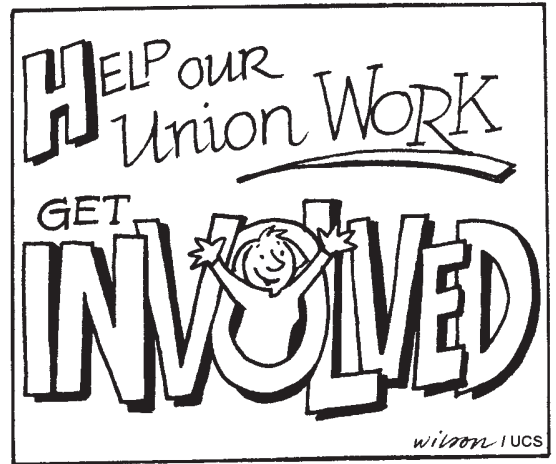
IBEW 1837 members are welcome at any unit meeting to discuss issues affecting their jobs and their union.

Some meeting dates, times and locations may have changed.

Units may not meet during storms or on holidays.

Check with your steward, the union office, or log on to

www.ibew1837.org before driving!



Unit 1, Dover: Third Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

IBEW Local 1837 Office; 680 Central Ave., Suite 202; Dover NH 03820

Unit 2, Manchester General: Second Tuesday at 5:15 p.m.

Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 131 Union Hall; 161 Londonderry Turnpike; Hooksett, NH 03106

Unit 2, Concord Electric Sub-unit: Third Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.

West Congregational Church; 499 No. State Street; Concord, NH 03301

Unit 3, Laconia: Third Thursday at 5:15 p.m.

Laconia Elks Lodge; 17 Sugarbush Lane; Gilford, NH 03249

Unit 4, Berlin/ Lancaster: Fourth Wednesday at 5:15 p.m.

Randolph Town Hall; 130 Durand Road; Randolph, NH 03593

Unit 5, Keene: First Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

January, April and October only: Parlin Field Airport; Airport Road; Newport, NH 03773

All other meetings: Recreation Center; 312 Washington Street; Keene, NH 03431

Unit 6, Portland: First Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

Teamsters 340 Union Hall; 144 Thadeus Street; South Portland, ME 04106

Unit 7, Lewiston: First Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

IBEW Local 567 Union Hall; 238 Goddard Road; Lewiston, ME 04240

Unit 8, Augusta: Third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m.

IBEW Local 1837 Office (Conference Room); 16 Old Winthrop Road; Manchester, ME 04351

Unit 9, Waterville: Second Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

IBEW Local 1253 Union Hall; 176 Main Street; Fairfield, ME 04937

Unit 10, Bangor/Ellsworth: Third Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

January, April, July and October only: Ellsworth City Hall; 1 City Hall Plaza; Ellsworth, ME 04605

All other meetings: Solidarity Center; 20 Ivers Street; Brewer, ME 04412

Unit 11, Presque Isle: Fourth Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

Hampton Inn; 768 Main Street; Presque Isle, ME 04769



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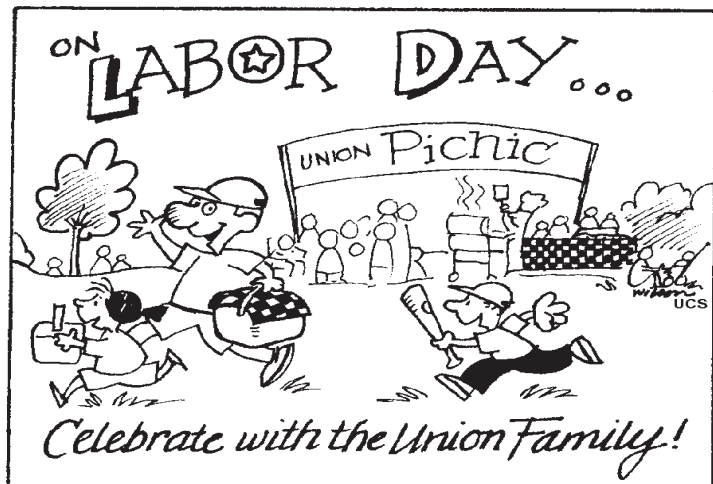
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The Current

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Vice President - Bill Tarallo

Treasurer - Kerry Guptill

Secretary - Pam Paquette

Business Manager - Dick Rogers

Assistant Business Managers -

Bill Dunn & Tom Ryan

Organizer/Newsletter Editor - Matthew Beck

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